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ABSTRACT

This document, which is intended for vocational educators, contains the materials needed for a group project designed to help students develop the employability skills required to create their own business. The document begins with the scenario for the learning project, during which teams are given a hypothetical $250,000 to form a new business related to their specific vocational program. Presented next are the project objectives, which are that students will be able to do the following: use effective oral and communication skills; demonstrate basic math skills; use computer skills to produce a word processed report; work well with team members; use higher-level problem-solving and critical thinking skills; apply organizational and time management principles; and demonstrate appropriate work ethics. The third section of the guide is an outline of the following four tasks assigned to students during the project, which are as follows: write a description of the business; design an organizational chart; create a budget; and develop an employee handbook. Concluding the guide are descriptions of the project tools and learning environment. Appended are a student project evaluation form; materials for an activity to help team members reflect on what they learned from being part of their learning team; teacher project evaluation form; and list of skills developed during the group project. (MN)

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ED 438 478

CREATING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Employability Skills Group Project

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CREATING YOUR OWN BUSINESS
Employability Skills Group Project

Notes to the Instructor

This project satisfies the requirement of Metro Tech's School Improvement Plan Target Area Goal 3 for one group project. Employability skill areas covered in this project include Communication Skills, Computational Skills, Computer Skills, Interpersonal Relations, Learning to Learn, Organization and Time Management, and Work Ethics. Instructors must develop an additional group project that is program specific to complete the requirements of Goal 3. For your program-specific group project, you may add an additional appendix that shows your program duties and tasks covered in the project.

Creating Your Own Business is a group project designed to allow students to be creative within the guidelines provided. Students should design their own methods of acquiring, organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing the information required for this project.

The instructor will provide assistance in the manner of suggestions and guidance rather than giving specific ways of carrying out the project.

Students will work in groups of four or five.

Recommended timeline is 3 to 12 weeks.

An assessment sheet is included in this project. The instructor may establish other grading guidelines: for example S or U; A, B, C; or extra points.

The instructor may give extra credit for the optional items in the project or may choose to require one or more optional items.

Basic math skills (whole numbers, decimals, percents, and fractions) are incorporated into this project. The instructor may choose to add more advanced math skills as appropriate for each program.

Prerequisites:

- Students must have been in the program at least one semester.
- Students should have basic computer knowledge.
- Students should be familiar with group dynamics and roles of responsibility when working within a group.

It is not necessary that **ALL** students be proficient in **ALL** skill areas. Encourage each group member to use his or her strengths in completion of the project. Students will also learn skills from each other in working as a team to complete this project.

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Creating Your Own Business

Employability Skills Group Project

Project Scenario

Employability skills are those foundational skills that will build on your vocational training to prepare you for successful employment in the workplace. Examples of these include skills that relate to communications, computation, interpersonal relations, organization and time management, and work ethics. This project will help you develop these employability skills that today's employers are demanding of their work force.

You and your team members will be given $250,000 to form a new business related to your specific vocational program. To set up this business, you and your team members must use various resources to gather information about the types of businesses in your vocational field, company organizational structures, budgets required, work ethics, and company policies.

Within your team, each team member will have assigned tasks and responsibilities to coordinate and distribute the work. Your instructor will give your team a time frame for beginning and completing this project.

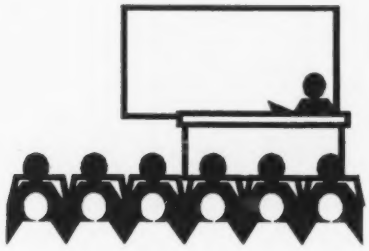
Creating Your Own Business

Employability Skills Group Project

Objectives

Project Objective:

At the completion of this project, you and your team members will make a written report and/or an oral presentation on the business you have created that is related to your vocational program. The written report must be word processed. Be prepared to make an oral presentation to the class. The oral presentation may include handouts, multimedia presentation, charts, and other items related to your project.



Specific Objectives:

1. Use effective oral and written communication skills.
2. Demonstrate basic math skills.
3. Use computer skills to produce word processed report.
4. Work well with team members.
5. Use higher level problem solving and critical thinking skills.
6. Apply organizational and time management principles.
7. Demonstrate appropriate work ethics.

Employability Skills Group Project

Tasks

The student will complete the following parts of the project:

1. **Write a description of the business.**

   Must include as a minimum, but not limited to, the following items:

   - Company name
   - Type of business (be specific)
   - Product or service offered
   - Number of employees
   - Targeted clients
   - Location of business

2. **Design an organizational chart.**

   Must include the following items showing the hierarchy of supervision:

   - Company name
   - Job titles
   - Job duties

3. **Create a budget.**

   Include at least, but not limited to, the following items:

   - Rent/lease costs
   - Salaries and benefits
   - Office furniture
   - Supplies
   - Utilities

Tasks (continued)

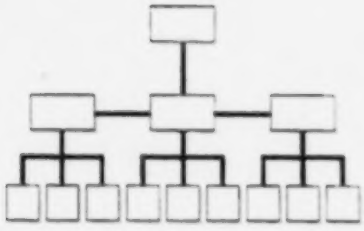
4. Develop an employee handbook.

Length of the handbook should be 2 – 5 pages including the following:

- Company philosophy or mission statement
- Work ethics expected of employees
- Policies for sick leave, vacation, and tardies
- Persons to call in case of emergencies or absences
- Policy regarding personal use of company equipment
- Personal appearance/dress code for your employees

Optional Items That Could Be Included in Final Report

- Floor plan including office furniture
- Marketing plan
- Benefits package
- Government required forms
- Projection for growth



Tools and Environment

Tools:

- Resources: Read encyclopedias, trade journals, newspapers, and books. Interview business people, teachers, career counselors, financial planners, and human resource directors. Research on the Internet.

Here are some suggested resources that may be helpful:

a. Books

- Burstiner, Irving. The Small Business Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting and Running Your Own Business, Simon and Schuster Trade, 1997.
- Harper, Stephen C. The McGraw-Hill Guide to Starting Your Own Business: A Step-by-Step Blueprint for the First-Time Entrepreneur, McGraw-Hill Companies, 1992.
- Paulson, Ed, and Marcia Layton. The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting Your Own Business, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1998.
- Weltman, Barbara. The Complete Idiot's Guide to Starting a Home-Based Business, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1997.

Tools and Environment (continued)

Tools: (continued)

- Resources: (continued)

  b. Internet

  - BIZLINK: Starting a Business
    http://www.bizlink.org/business/
  - Business Plan: Personnel/Organizational Chart
    (Type an underscore in each of the 2 blank spaces shown in the URL below.)
    http://www.nemonline.org/bus_plan/organ_chart.html
  - Lycos Business Guide: Setting Up a Business Plan
    (Type an underscore in each of the 4 blank spaces shown in the URL below.)
    http://lycos.com/wguide/wire/wire_484414_58312_3_1.html
  - Small Business Administration – Starting Your Business
    http://www.sba.gov/starting/

- Equipment: Classroom or EEC computers

Employability Skills Group Project

Tools and Environment (continued)

Environment:

- Team project with 4 or 5 team members.
- Work will be done inside and outside of class time.

Assessment

Your team will be evaluated on the following areas:

Area	Points
Planning/Organization	150
Number/Types of Resources Used	100
Typed Team Report	300
Oral Presentation	150
Overall Impression	100
Team Member Evaluations	100
Individual Paper	100
Total Points Possible	1000

Optional Items

100 bonus points to be awarded for each optional item included in the final project.

Appendix A: Project Evaluations

Employability Skills Group Project

TEAM MEMBER EVALUATION

(For Student Use)

Team Member Name: _____

Using a scale of 1 to 5, rate your evaluation of this team member's performance in achieving the objectives for successful completion of the project.

1=No Opinion/don't know

2=Strongly disagree

3=Disagree

4=Agree

5=Strongly agree

The team member	**Circle One**
1. was cooperative in planning meetings.	1 2 3 4 5
2. followed through with assigned tasks/responsibilities.	1 2 3 4 5
3. offered suggestions for completing tasks and solving problems.	1 2 3 4 5
4. supported other team members when difficulties and meeting deadlines arose.	1 2 3 4 5
5. treated other members' ideas with respect.	1 2 3 4 5
6. demonstrated organizational skills.	1 2 3 4 5
7. asked questions when they needed more information or did not understand a task.	1 2 3 4 5
8. had good attendance during the project time.	1 2 3 4 5

Revised 3/23/99

Appendix A: Project Evaluations

Employability Skills Group Project

WHAT I LEARNED FROM BEING A PART OF THIS TEAM

Reflect on the following questions and then compose your responses in paragraph summary form. Edit your paper carefully before printing the final copy.

1. How understood and listened to did you feel in your group?

2. In your opinion, what do you think the group did well in working together?

3. What could have been done better within the group?

4. How much responsibility do you think you had in the final outcome of the project?

5. How satisfied are you with the amount and quality of **your** participation in the group's work?

Revised 3/23/99

Employability Skills Group Project

PROJECT EVALUATION

(For Teacher Use)

Team Members: _____

_____

Total Points Possible		**1000**
1. Planning/Organization - (written notes, timeline)	150	
2. Number/Types of Resources Used	100	
3. Typed Team Report	300	
4. Oral Presentation	150	
5. Overall Impression - (keyboarding errors, appropriate formatting, substantive content)	100	
6. Team Member Evaluations	100	
7. Individual Paper - ("What I Learned From Being a Part of This Team")	100	
TOTAL POINTS AWARDED		
BONUS POINTS AWARDED		

COMMENTS:

Appendix B: *Why Am I Doing This?*

Employability Skills Group Project

Skills Developed

As you complete this project, you will be developing the employability skills listed below. These skills have been identified as fundamental skills for successful employment by business and industry representatives in the Oklahoma City metropolitan area.

Communication Skills

- Interpret written information.
- Demonstrate basic writing skills.
- Demonstrate basic speaking skills.
- Follow instructions.
- Interpret verbal, non-verbal, and body language.
- Demonstrate listening skills.

Computational Skills

Demonstrate basic math skills relating to:

- Whole numbers
- Decimals
- Percents
- Fractions

Computer Skills

- Demonstrate basic computer literacy.
- Work within the Windows environment.
- Word process documents.

Interpersonal Relations

- Get along with others.
- Work as a team member.

Employability Skills Group Project

Skills Developed (continued)

Learning to Learn

- Make independent decisions.
- Locate information.
- Demonstrate creative thinking.
- Use problem solving skills.
- Use logical thinking skills.
- Demonstrate study skills.

Organization and Time Management

- Organize work activities.
- Work under pressure.
- Adjust to work situations.
- Manage time and materials.
- Demonstrate leadership skills.

Work Ethics

- Demonstrate punctuality and dependability.
- Give an honest day's work.
- Show loyalty to your organization/team.
- Know what is expected.
- Work without close supervision.
- Be neat and clean in appearance.